



STAFF REPORT
for consideration by the
CATHEDRAL CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: General Plan: Housing Element Update Community Workshop

DEPARTMENT: Planning Department

MEETING DATE: July 24, 2013

CONTACT PERSON: Leisa Lukes, RLA

DEADLINE FOR ACTION: N/A

BACKGROUND

The Housing Element is the only Element of the General Plan that requires updating on a State-established schedule. The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) requires that the Element be updated for the 5th Cycle planning period of 2014 through 2021. The law mandates that HCD review and comment on the adequacy of the Draft Housing Element Update.

The Housing Element is required to address how the City will facilitate the maintenance, improvement and development of housing for all income groups and persons with disabilities and other special needs during the planning period, with a particular focus on affordable housing for those with incomes below the County median income, which in 2013 is estimated at \$65,000 for a family of four.

At the Planning Commission public workshop scheduled for July 24, the consultant, John Douglas of J.H. Douglas and Associates, will provide an overview of the updated Housing Element, as well as solicit input on the draft recommendations. A notice of the workshop was placed in the Desert Sun and also mailed to large employers within the city and other interested stakeholders, such as Coachella Valley Housing Coalition and Riverside Housing Development Corporation. The workshop notice and draft Housing Element was also posted on the City's website (www.cathedralcity.gov).

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element includes analysis of housing needs, resources available the City, governmental and non-governmental constraints, and City policies and programs related to the maintenance, improvement and development of housing for all segments of the community. Two components of the Housing Element normally receive the most attention: 1) the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA); and 2) City zoning regulations that affect housing for lower-income households and persons with special needs.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment: The RHNA is a state-mandated process by which each jurisdiction is allocated a share of statewide housing need. For jurisdictions in Riverside County, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is

responsible for preparing the RHNA allocations, in consultation with subregional councils of governments such as the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG). For the new planning cycle, the total RHNA allocation for the 6-county SCAG region¹ is approximately 400,000 new housing units.

For the 2014 through 2021 planning period, Cathedral City has been assigned a total RHNA allocation of 600 new housing units, with 236 of those allocated to the very-low and low income categories, as depicted in the table below:

2014-2021 Regional Housing Needs Assessment City of Cathedral City		
2013 Areawide Median Income = \$65,000	No. of Units	Income Limits
Very Low (31-50% AMI)*	141*	\$33,500
Low (51-80% AMI)	95	\$53,600
Moderate (81-120% AMI)	110	\$78,000
Above moderate (120%+ AMI)	254	\$78,000+
Total Units	600	

Source: SCAG 2012

*50% of the Very Low units are allocated to the Extremely Low income category

It is important to note that cities are not required to build or provide funding assistance for the number of housing units reflected in the RHNA. State law does require that cities identify sufficient sites with appropriate zoning to accommodate the level of development assigned in the RHNA, and also adopt policies and programs to facilitate the rehabilitation and development of housing for lower-income households to the extent feasible. With the statewide elimination of redevelopment agencies in 2012, the resources available to cities for this purpose has been significantly reduced. It should be noted, however, that the RHNA allocation for the current 5th Cycle is significantly reduced from the 4th Cycle (2006-2013) RHNA allocation of 3,329 units.

Zoning Regulations for Lower-Income Households and Persons With Special Needs: An important aspect of the Housing Element is demonstrating that the City's zoning regulations do not pose unreasonable constraints to affordable housing development or housing for persons with disabilities or other special needs. The issues analyzed in the Housing Element include allowable housing types and densities, development standards, fees, permit procedures, and regulations on special housing types such as community care facilities and transitional housing.

Issues for the New Housing Element: No major changes to the Housing Element policies and programs are required for the new planning period. The previous Housing Element included several implementation programs to create additional capacity for

¹ The SCAG region includes Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties.

higher-density housing and address prior changes to state law regarding housing for persons with special needs. One minor change that has recently occurred in state law affects the limits that can be placed on transitional housing. Staff is preparing an ordinance amendment for compliance with the requirements of state law. The other noteworthy revisions in the new element are refinements to the level of funding for housing programs due to the elimination of the City's redevelopment agency.

NEXT STEPS

Any recommended changes to the draft Housing Element will be made following the Planning Commission workshop. It will then be submitted to HCD for review, as required by state law. During the state's 60-day review period, staff will coordinate with HCD to address any questions they may have. During this time, the environmental review will also be performed; the transitional housing ordinance amendment will be completed; and the required SB18 tribal review will be finalized. Upon completion of the HCD review period, public hearings with the Planning Commission and City Council will be performed in October to consider adoption of the new element, and the final document submitted to HCD for approval within the required 5th Cycle adoption schedule.

ATTACHMENT

Community Workshop Notice